

Indeed, the tragedy in Michigan that so many of us mourn could not have been reversed by expecting a 19-year-old criminal to put a lock on a loaded gun in a shoe box, preventing a 6 year old from getting the gun.

Laws do not make the difference. Enforcing the current laws do. While we have an administration that refuses to enforce current laws and in some cases refuses to obey current laws, we have the crux of the problem confronting America.

IN MEMORY OF BEN RANDALL

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have lost a very dear friend, and the Houston community has lost a dear friend, and as well Texas, and maybe even the Nation. Ben Randall, a community activist lost his life just about a week ago. I rise today to pay tribute to an individual who never said no to the community needs of Houston, Texas.

Energetic, creative, thoughtful, and caring was Ben Randall. He loved his family. He loved his two sons, outstanding as they are, leaders in their own right, academic geniuses. Ben Randall was always so proud.

He worked for Texas Southern University. He was a community relations activist, working for Enron. He worked for small businesses and tried to develop opportunities for minority businesses to do and have greater economic opportunities. He helped on issues of fund-raising for any charity one can imagine.

He loved his God. He loved his church, Windsor Village United Methodist Church. He was an activist there. He had prayer partners. He prayed for others.

Whenever there was an opportunity to share his values and his commitment to the greatness of this Nation, Ben Randall was there. He loved this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that, as we bury him and as we buried him in his hometown of San Antonio, the tears of those of us who lived in Houston continue to pour.

We memorialize him today on April 5 in Houston because so many friends could not make it to San Antonio, but they needed to honor him and say good-bye. It is right to pay tribute to him and to do it with love, and do it with respect.

I say farewell to my friend, Ben Randall. He may be gone, but he will be forever in our memories. We salute him for the great humanitarian efforts he made on behalf of so many people. God bless him and God bless America.

TAX COUNTDOWN

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the countdown is on. The tax clock is ticking. The day the American workers dread the most, tax day, is only 10 days away.

April 15 looms on the calendar each year as an ominous reminder of the crushing burden of the current Federal Tax Code. While the IRS often stands behind closed doors, American working men and women struggle to keep pace with an out-of-control Federal agency.

Over the next 10 days, taxpayers across this country will spend sleepless nights and countless hours in an attempt to figure out exactly the correct amount of their hard-earned money and how much they must send to the Federal Government.

Heaven forbid the amount will be off even by a single cent and cause the taxpayers the horror of facing the unbridled wrath of an audit by the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. Speaker, we must act now to enact comprehensive tax reform, giving our working families a fairer, flatter, and simpler tax without an IRS.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back our antiquated and oppressive tax system that continues to burden too many hard-working Americans every year.

BALANCED BUDGET PROVES REPUBLICAN CONGRESS IS SERIOUS ABOUT ITS PROMISE TO BALANCE BUDGET AND CONTROL DEFICIT SPENDING

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, let me see if I have got this straight. I am supposed to be impressed that the government is not going to spend more money than it has. I am supposed to rejoice that the government is not going to make our \$5 trillion national debt any worse. I am supposed to brag to my constituents that Washington is going to balance its budget.

Well, Mr. Speaker, by the standards of Washington, yes.

Balancing the budget should not be a big deal; it should not be treated as some great achievement. But I must say, after 30 years of expanding the welfare state every year, balancing the budget is no mean feat. Balancing the budget, which to me is only common sense, is an extraordinary thing in a town that has seen nothing but deficits since 1969.

This balanced budget is proof of two things. First, the Republican Congress is serious about its promise to balance the budget. Second, deficit spending does not have to be a way of life.

Now that is something to brag about.

CENSUS BUREAU SHOULD GET AWARD FOR BIGGEST GOVERNMENT SCREW UP

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, if there were an award for the biggest government screw up of the year, the Census Bureau would win the award going away.

The Census Bureau, which has been planning the 2000 census for 10 years, now sent out 120 million pre-notification cards with the wrong address. That is right, Mr. Speaker, the wrong address. Most of us learned to address a letter by the time we left the third grade. I guess the folks at the Census Bureau were absent that day. This from the folks who want to use smoke and mirrors to adjust the final results of the census.

The American people know better, Mr. Speaker. The Census Bureau certainly has some explaining to do. If the Bureau cannot be trusted to address mail properly, how can we trust them with their risky statistical scheme.

GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO SPEND TAXPAYER MONEY WISELY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, last year when the House proposed to Federal agencies that they cut out 1 cent of every dollar they spend, the Clinton administration screamed bloody murder. Cut out 1 cent from the Federal Government for every dollar we spend? There is no way. We are too efficient, too effective.

The Secretary of Interior said there is absolutely no waste in my department and yet went on to waste money after money.

Let me give my colleagues an example. The Social Security Administration sent out \$3.3 billion in checks to people who were ineligible for it. Well, they might look there.

How about the rocket launchers? AL GORE is a big gun control advocate, but when one of the \$1 million rocket launcher disappeared, there was no word from the administration. Now, that is scary enough, but then another one disappeared. Think about that. There are two rocket launchers at large somewhere in our society. Yet, the folks in the Gore-Clinton administration are telling us there is no waste in government.

Mr. Speaker, we have got to do a better job. We are not spending our money. Contrary to the government dogma that it is government money, it is not. It is taxpayer money. It is what people back home work real hard to send to us. We need to be fiduciaries of it. We need to spend it carefully.